

KENT M. WILLIAMS
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SENATORIAL DISTRICT 30

COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
CORRECTIONS AND PENOLOGY
FISH, GAME AND FORESTRY
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Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, Southwest
Washington, DC 20554

June 15, 2011

Dear Commissioners:

There are more than a million children in South Carolina – nearly one in every four residents. I believe that we are our children's future – our decisions today can make a better tomorrow for them.

One decision we can make for the children of South Carolina and the country is to do all we can to see that every family, every school, every person has access to high-speed Internet service. This is a digital world, and without the means to go online, children will grow up without the knowledge they will need for a productive and successful life.

AT&T is making a commitment to extend the next generation of its wireless broadband network to nearly everyone in the country if it can complete its merger with T-Mobile. This means that the service will reach 55 million more people than without this merger. Let's approve this deal and give our children (as well as all of our citizens) the tools they need.

In South Carolina, more than 136,000 of our state's children had no health insurance in 2009, and for many, their only access to health care was the school nurse. Twenty-seven percent of our students drop out of school, leading too many to end up on welfare or in prison. Nearly 20 percent of our children live in poverty.

Having access to wireless broadband Internet service can help address these problems. We can lower the cost of healthcare – both in money and in time – by connecting rural healthcare facilities and patients to providers, cutting hospital stays and reducing costly trips to specialists, for example. Students can indulge their creativity online, while working to complete degrees in virtual classrooms if that model fits better into their lifestyles. Schools and mentors can reach out beyond the classroom.

There are many ways our children and all of our citizens can improve our lives, but we must provide the tools. AT&T's planned investment of billions of dollars into next-generation wireless service is not something that we can pass up. I urge you to approve this merger. I am certain that is in the best interest of the American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kent Williams", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sen. Kent Williams
District 30
South Carolina Senate

CC:
Chairman Julius Genachowski
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Robert McDowell